

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505Registry
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1 OCT 1973

W.E. Sledge

The Honorable John C. Stennis
Chairman,
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The following is a status report on CIA's activities with respect to the former Lao irregular forces, as promised in my letter of 28 July 1973 to Acting Chairman Symington.

The physical integration of the Lao irregulars into the Royal Lao Armed Forces has been completed. Several administrative problems continue to exist within the Lao Armed Forces themselves. These involve such matters as final determination on the career status of ex-irregular commissioned and non-commissioned officers and final disposition of irregular personnel who are physically or otherwise not qualified for the Royal Lao Armed Forces. A more important administrative problem is the necessity for the U.S. Government to continue to pay salaries and subsistence to the ex-Lao irregular forces until the total Royal Laos Armed Forces personnel strength, including ex-irregulars, is reduced to 50,000 men in FY 74.

FAR forces have in past years been funded through the FEOF supported Royal Lao budget which has been sufficient for a total Royal Lao Armed Forces personnel strength of approximately 50,000 men. The integration of the irregulars has raised the total Laos force level to approximately 73,000. Present plans call for a reduction of total force strength to 60,000 as of 1 January 1974 and 50,000 on or before 30 June 1974. However, no action has as yet been taken on these reductions because of the Royal Lao Government need to retain all available forces until successful conclusion of the current negotiations. Our best estimate is that the negotiations will be concluded and a coalition government formed in the near future. Lao Armed Forces reductions should commence shortly thereafter.

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Letter to: The Honorable John C. Stennis
Chairman,
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

cc: The Honorable Stuart Symington
United States Senate

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[Redacted Signature]

Deputy Director for Operations

1 Oct 1973
Date

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